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rage whatever tends to promote it; though, unfortunately, there still exists a class of men who seek to maintain undeserved superiority, by keeping all persons subordinate to them in ignorance, instead of generously extending to them such help as would enable them to advance in intelligence. How different was the feeling of him who said, that if permitted to have his wishes accomplished he would ask but for two: the first, that he might possess all knowledge that man in his finite nature can or ought to possess; and the second, that having attained this knowledge, all his fellow-creatures might be admitted to a participation of it.

The value of observation as an accessible source of information to all, must be obvious; the infant observes before he reasons, and reason advances with the powers of observing. When the man becomes a sage, he may theorise; but he must first test his wisdom by observation, which would thus appear to be the fulcrum on which mind must depend to raise itself; and as opportunities of observation are now daily increasing, it becomes a matter of importance to aid those who are inclined, by showing them how to observe, and to draw out the latent talent in those who, having eyes, yet see not; and there is no mode in which this can be more effectually and agreeably done than by drawing their attention to those natural objects by which they are surrounded. The sacred writers were well aware of the value of thus directing the mind; and our poets have in many instances derived applause and celebrity from their power of accurately observing and faithfully describing the phenomena of nature.

To aid the people in the acquirement of knowledge so desirable, our best efforts shall not be wanting, and we propose to ourselves accordingly to give a series of papers on Natural History, pointing out, in a popular manner, what all who have eyes may see, and, seeing, profit by.

B.

ANSALDO AND THE CATS.

EVERYBODY, we presume, has heard or read the story of "Whittington and his Cat," which is an especial favourite with the worthy citizens of "London town," where it is matter of history that the once poor and friendless little boy rose to be thrice Lord Mayor; but from the tale quoted below, it would seem that the Italians are not without a version of their own on the subject. Which of the two is the most ancient or original, we confess our inability to decide, but it is a matter of very little consequence, as the moral in each is similar, namely, that perseverance and industry will generally meet their just reward, while the endeavours of an idle and improvident man to realise a great fortune all at once, by some wild and desperate speculation, pretty much the same as gambling, or even, as we may add, by that detestable and degrading vice itself, rarely fails to involve the rash projector in ruin and disgrace. However, without fatiguing the reader with further preface, we will present him with the following literal translation from the Italian of Lorenzo Magaletti:—

"About the time when our Amerigo Vespucci discovered the new world, there was a merchant in our town whose name was Messer Ansaldo degli Ormani, who, though he had become very rich, but yet desirous to double his wealth, chartered a very large ship, and began to trade with his merchandise in the newly-discovered regions of the West. Having already made two or three prosperous voyages, he wished to return thither once more; but scarcely had he left Cadiz when there arose a most furious gale, which drove him along for several days, without his knowing where he was; but at length fortune was so kind as to enable him to reach an island called Canaria. He had no sooner done so than the king, being informed of the arrival of a vessel, went down to the port with all his nobles, and gave Messer Ansaldo a kind reception: he then conducted him to the royal palace, to show his joy at his arrival. Dinner was then prepared in the most sumptuous style, and he sat down with Messer Ansaldo, who was surprised to see a great number of youths who held in their hands long sticks, similar to those used by penitents; but no sooner were the viands served up than he understood fast enough the meaning of such attendance, for

'Not Xerxes led so many into Greece,
Nor numerous thus the myrmidonic bands,
As on the scene their countless hosts appeared!'

BERNI.

In fact, so many and so large were the rats which came in from all quarters, that it was really wonderful to see them. Thereupon the youths aforesaid took to their sticks, and with great labour defended the dish from which the king and Messer Ansaldo were eating. When the latter had heard and seen the multitudes of those filthy animals which were innumerable in that island (nor had any means been found to extirpate them), he sought to make the king understand by signs that he wished to provide him with a remedy by means of which he might be freed from such horrid creatures; and running quickly to the ship, he took two very fine cats, male and female, and brought them to the king, saying that on the next occasion they should be put upon the table. As soon therefore as the smell of the meat began to diffuse itself, the usual procession made its appearance, when the cats seeing it began to scatter them so bravely that there was very soon a prodigious slaughter of the enemy.

On seeing this, the delighted king, wishing to remunerate Ansaldo, sent for many strings of pearls, with gold, silver, and rare precious stones, which he presented to Messer Ansaldo, who, thinking he had made a good profit of his merchandise, spread his sails to the wind, prosecuted his voyage, and returned home immensely rich.

Some time afterwards, he was relating what had occurred between himself and the King of Canaria to a circle of his friends, when one of them, named Giocondo de Finfall, was seized with a desire to make the voyage to Canaria himself, to try his fortune also; and in order to do so, sold an estate he had in the Val d'Elsa, and invested the money in a great quantity of jewels, together with rings and bracelets of immense value; and having given out that he intended to go to the Holy Land, lest any should blame his resolution, he repaired to Cadiz, where he embarked, and soon arrived at Canaria. He presented his riches to the king, reasoning in this manner:—'If Messer Ansaldo got so much for a paltry pair of cats, how much more will be my just recompense for what I have brought his majesty!' But the poor man deceived himself, because the King of Canaria, who highly esteemed the present of Giocondo, did not think he could make him a fairer exchange than by giving him a cat; so having sent for a very fine one, son to those which Ansaldo had given him, he presented it to Giocondo; but he, thinking himself insulted, returned miserably poor to Florence, continually cursing the King of Canaria, the rats, and Messer Ansaldo and his cats; but he was wrong, because that good king, in making him a present of a cat, gave him what he considered the most valuable thing in his dominions."

W. S. T.

INSCRIPTION ON A TOMBSTONE IN THE CHURCHYARD OF YOUGHAL,

ON ANNE MARIA CAREW, AGED 24.

'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus, when hope hath built a bow'r
Like that of Eden, wreathed about with many a thornless flow'r,
To dwell therein securely, the self-deceivers trust—
A whirlwind from the desert comes, and all is in the dust.

'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus, that when the poor heart clings
With all its finest tendrils, with all its flexile rings,
That goodly thing it cleaveth to so fondly and so fast,
Is struck to earth by lightning, or shattered by the blast.

'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus, with beams of mortal bliss,
With looks too bright and beautiful for such a world as this,
One moment round about us their angel light wings play;
Then down the veil of darkness drops, and all is passed away.

'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus, with creatures heavenly fair,
Too finely formed to bear the brunt more earthly natures bear—
A little while they dwell with us, blest ministers of love,
Then spread the wings we had not seen, and seek their homes above.

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